

reinforcing way to enhance Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

6. NATO embodies the vital partnership between Europe and North America. We welcome the further impetus that has been given to the strengthening of European defence capabilities to enable the European Allies to act more effectively together, thus reinforcing the transatlantic partnership.

7. We remain determined to stand firm against those who violate human rights, wage war and conquer territory. We will maintain both the political solidarity and the military forces necessary to protect our nations and to meet the security challenges of the next century. We pledge to improve our defence capabilities to fulfill the full range of the Alliance's 21st century missions. We will continue to build confidence and security through arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation measures. We reiterate our condemnation of terrorism and our determination to protect ourselves against this scourge.

8. Our Alliance remains open to all European democracies, regardless of geography, willing and able to meet the responsibilities of membership, and whose inclusion would enhance overall

security and stability in Europe. NATO is an essential pillar of a wider community of shared values and shared responsibility. Working together, Allies and Partners, including Russia and Ukraine, are developing their cooperation and erasing the divisions imposed by the Cold War to help to build a Europe whole and free, where security and prosperity are shared and indivisible.

9. Fifty years after NATO's creation, the destinies of North America and Europe remain inseparable. When we act together, we safeguard our freedom and security and enhance stability more effectively than any of us could alone. Now, and for the century about to begin, we declare as the fundamental objectives of this Alliance enduring peace, security and liberty for all people of Europe and North America.

NOTE: The joint statement was signed and issued by the heads of state and government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, DC, on April 23 and 24. It was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Statement on Congressional Inaction on Legislation To Strengthen Social Security *April 23, 1999*

I am deeply disappointed by reports that the congressional Republican leadership has abandoned the effort to enact legislation this year to strengthen Social Security for the 21st century. We have an obligation to ensure that Social Security is safe and strong not only for today's seniors but for our children and future generations as well. The American people expect us to meet this fundamental challenge. Instead, just one week after passing a budget that promises a massive \$800 billion tax cut, the Republican leadership is sending a message that Congress is either unable or unwilling to face up to the challenge of strengthening Social Security.

That is not acceptable, and I urge the Republican leadership to reconsider its opposition to acting on Social Security this year. I have proposed concrete steps to bolster Social Security

and offered time and again to work with the Congress in a bipartisan way to make the tough choices needed to secure the Trust Fund over the long term. Republican leaders have yet to consider my proposals or advance any of their own.

Our economy is the strongest it has been in a generation. Now is the time to strengthen Social Security for the future. I remain committed to working with Members of Congress of both parties who are committed to enacting comprehensive Social Security legislation this year. We can and must accomplish this critical goal for the American people.